

EXHIBIT “E”



NEWS / GCC

Defence minister: Saudi, UAE intended to invade Qatar

Khalid bin Mohammad al-Attiyah says siege countries 'have tried everything' from provoking tribes and replacing leader.

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Qatar's defence minister stressed the need for open dialogue as a means to end the ongoing GCC crisis [Reuters]

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had intentions to invade Qatar at the beginning of a diplomatic crisis that erupted in June, according to Qatar's defence minister.

In an interview with the Washington Post on Friday, Khalid bin Mohammad al-Attiyah said his Gulf neighbours have "tried everything" to destabilise the country, but their intentions to invade were "[defused]" by Qatar.

"They have intentions to intervene militarily," said al-Attiyah.

When asked to confirm whether he thought such a threat still existed today, he responded: "We have [defused] this intention. But at the beginning of the crisis, they had this intention.

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"They tried to provoke the tribes. They used mosques against us. Then they tried to get some puppets to bring in and replace our leaders."

Al-Attiyah, who met US Defense Secretary James Mattis last week during a visit to Washington, DC, described the beginning of the crisis by the Saudi-led bloc as an "ambush" that was "miscalculated".

In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt and Bahrain cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar and imposed a land, sea and air blockade after accusing it of supporting "terrorism" and "extremism".

Qatar has strongly denied the allegations.

Al-Attiyah said Qatar is the only country that has signed a memorandum of understanding with the US to counter terrorism in the region - namely in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.

He stressed the need for open dialogue as a means to end the ongoing crisis.

Asked about Doha's relations with Saudi's rival, Iran, al-Attiyah noted that Qatar maintains "friendly relations with everyone".

"We are responsible for the supply of [an enormous amount] of the world's energy. We have to have a smooth flow of energy, and that means we have to eliminate having enemies," he said, referring to the country's shared oilfield with Iran.

According to al-Attiyah, the Saudi-led bloc had planned to replace Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani with a new leader.

"They put their puppet, [Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Thani, a relative of a former Qatari emir], on TV," he said of the "failed" attempt.

"They can't do anything. The Qatari people love their emir."

On January 14, Sheikh Abdullah released a video statement, saying he was a "prisoner" in the UAE, and that if anything happened to him, "Sheikh Mohammed" is responsible.

While he did not specify, Abdullah appeared to be referring to Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Days later, he was hospitalised in Kuwait. Later, reports emerged he threatened suicide.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA NEWS